Rebozo Tied To Firing of Hughes Aide

Post 5/18/74

LOS ANGELES, May 17 (AP)—Robert A. Maheu has testified he fired John H. Meier from Howard Hughes' Nevada operations after C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo asked a Hughes executive to break up a close relationship between Meier and President Nixon's brother.

Maheu, a former Hughes aide, testified Thursday in his $17.5 million defamation suit against Hughes. Maheu claims he was defamed when Hughes said in a 1972 telephone news conference that Maheu "stole me blind."

"Over a period of several months we had been requested by the White House to break up what they called a 'romance' between Mr. Meier and Mr. Donaid Nixon," Maheu told a federal court jury.

Maheu said Rebozo, a close friend of Mr. Nixon, made the request in 1969 to Richard Danner, who had just become a Hughes hotel executive in Las Vegas.

Meier, former Hughes science adviser, was recently indicted on charges of conspiracy and tax evasion in connection with mining claims sold to Hughes. The Hughes organization has also sued him for $9 million.

Maheu said Rebozo told Danner it did not look good that Meier and F. Donald Nixon traveled extensively together, "one representing Hughes and the other with the name of the President."

Rebozo asked Danner to get cooperation from the Hughes organization to end the travels, Maheu said.

U.S. District Judge Harry Pregerson told the jury the testimony was not being taken to find the truth of what Rebozo may have said, but only what Maheu was told.

Maheu said he hired Meier after Hughes asked him in 1966 if he knew someone with a scientific background who could work to stop underground nuclear testing in Nevada.